

Lawthorn Primary School & Early Years Class



Anti-Bullying Policy

KINDNESS HONESTY RESPECT RESPONSIBILITY

At Lawthorn Primary School, we are committed to creating an environment where bullying cannot thrive. This policy outlines the school's zero-tolerance stance toward bullying and sets out the procedures for prevention, intervention, and support in line with national guidance and legislation. This policy links with our Behaviour and Relationships Policy and applies to our whole school community aligning with:

- Respect for All: The National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People (Scottish Government, 2024)
- The Equality Act 2010
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Our commitment to Children's Rights underpins our approach to anti-bullying at Lawthorn. This means that our pupils have, in line with the UNCRC, the right to not be discriminated against, the right to have decisions taken in their best interest, the right to be kept safe from harm and the right to be given a voice.

The safety and inclusion of our pupils, their Right to an Education and their Right to be Safe, is paramount. Bullying is a barrier to enjoying their rights.

LAWTHORN'S VISION & VALUES

Our school vision and values create a consistent, positive culture across the school. By embedding our core values into every aspect of school life, we help children develop a strong moral compass, build meaningful relationships, and take responsibility for their actions. Our school vision and values promotes positive behaviour and supports emotional wellbeing, resilience, and a sense of belonging, laying the foundation for lifelong success both in and beyond the classroom.

OUR VISION



OUR PROMISE

We will welcome our children and families to our school community and work together as a team. We will support children's learning and wellbeing as well as embracing their unique talents and interests.



OUR VALUES



WHAT IS BULLYING?

The Scottish Government defines bullying as 'face-to-face and/or online behaviour which impacts on a person's sense of physical and emotional safety, their capacity to feel in control of their life and their ability to respond effectively to the situation they are in'

(Respect for All: National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People, Scottish Government 2024)

Bullying may include verbal, physical, social, or online actions that cause harm, fear, or exclusion. Prejudice-based bullying includes behaviour motivated by characteristics such as disability, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or other protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

ONLINE BULLYING

Online bullying is the same type of behaviour, but it takes place online, usually on social networking sites or in group chats. A person can be called names, threatened, or have rumours spread about them online and in group chat. Unkind and hurtful comments in group chats are just as serious as ones made face to face.

Children are taking part in group chats as young as Primary 4. These chats are rarely supervised by adults and as such can become unkind very quickly and children this age do not have the skills to manage the impact of this.

It is the responsibility of parents and carers to teach their children how to behave online and how to safely use social media and devices. It is for parents and carers to set limits on screen time, what content they can access and to follow the expectations on use of mobile phones in schools.

RESPONDING TO BULLYING

'Children who are bullied do not feel like themselves, they feel like they have something taken away from them. They feel they lose the ability to manage what is happening to them and worry a great deal about what might happen if they tell, if they speak up or if they ignore it.' (Brian Donnelly 2021 <https://orbistc.com/anti-bullying/>).

What you do about bullying is more important than how you define it.

If we respond to the behaviour and the impact, we will be able to discover if it was bullying. We do not try to figure out if it was bullying before responding. We act as soon as something happens.

Our response to bullying is grounded in our values:

- *Kindness* – We act with empathy and care when supporting all children involved.
- *Honesty* – We encourage open conversations and truthful reflection about behaviour and its impact.
- *Respect* – We challenge prejudice and ensure every child feels valued and included.
- *Responsibility* – We take ownership of our actions and work to repair harm caused.

We recognised that bullying can affect friendships, place pressure on families, and may lead to natural consequences such as increased supervision, parents or carers involvement, and changes to a pupil's involvement in particular activities.

Our staff will respond to any concerns or allegations of bullying by asking:

What was the behaviour?

- What age and stage are the individuals?
- Where they friends before the incident?
- What attitudes, prejudices, or other factors may have led to the behaviour?

What Impact did it have?

- Childs View
- Parents View
- Has pupil changed decision making after the incident?

What do I need to do about it?

- What does the pupil want to happen?
- Problem solving to support the child experiencing behaviour
- Learning and consequences for the child showing the behaviour

This is helpful as it breaks incidents and allegations down into a manageable, solution-focused process. All staff can respond to bullying and must always share this with the Leadership Team for advice, support and guidance.

We separate behaviour and impact to help us explore what happened and what we need to do, then we bring these two parts together as part of our solution and response to incidents of bullying. Looking at behaviour and impact as two distinct things, it gives us a framework on how to respond to all incidents. This will tell us if we are dealing with unkind behaviour or bullying.

This approach will allow us to deal with each situation in a fair and even way.

- A hurtful or cheeky comment that makes me annoyed or a bit upset, isn't bullying, its unkind, mean behaviour. We will still treat this seriously.
- Some unkind behaviour has little or no impact. This does not mean the behaviour is acceptable. Pupils will be accountable for behaviour and language regardless of the impact. When it has had a serious impact, our responses will reflect this.
- Every situation is unique, and our response will focus on both aspects. We will explore and challenge any unkind behaviour and we will help people develop skills to manage and to respond to behaviour.
- Bullying is usually intentional but there are occasions where language and actions can still harm someone and cause serious upset. In cases such as this, an explanation as to why what they said or did was unacceptable should see the behaviour or language stop.

Some behaviours can be dealt with quickly and effectively by adults by focusing on what someone did and the impact it had. We will help our pupils understand that -

- They have options on how to respond.
- Everyone does not have to be friends.
- Learning how to manage friendships is a skill we all develop at school.
- Apologising means that your behaviour changes.
- Just because it is not bullying, it does not mean the language or behaviour is okay.

Bullying is more serious, and the effect can last longer than simply being upset. Bullying is both unkind, hurtful behaviour **and** a particular kind of lasting impact. Consequences for bullying will be appropriate to each situation and the pupils involved.

It is important to gently ask the child what was the behaviour that made them feel this way. Sometimes the interpersonal nature of bullying makes it hard to focus on what someone did as well as how they made you feel. Adults need to know what behaviour they will be challenging so we can let others know it is wrong and why it is wrong.

We know that bullying takes away a child's sense of being themselves and being able to act. Therefore, the most important step we can take for a bullied child is to help them regain this sense of agency, to give them back some control.

We help restore agency by asking:

What would you like me to do?

What do you think should happen?

The asking of this immediately puts them in a position where their voice can be heard.

Explore 'what do you think might happen if we try this/that?' and invite the pupil to begin problem solving, this life skill will be essential for them. This way they can understand the outcome and what you'll do in relation to the behaviour but also what you have done to support them.

HOW DO WE RESPOND TO CHILDREN WHO ARE BULLYING?

Children and young people who bully need our support and guidance to make things better.

Learning to manage relationships, to deal with difficulties, and to learn about how other people can be affected by our actions, is an essential part of growing up.

We are committed to dealing with behaviour and impact, we never ignore bullying behaviour and there will always be natural consequences for this at Lawthorn Primary School.

Pupils who are exhibiting bullying behaviour will be given help and support to:

- Identify the feelings that cause them to act this way.
- Develop alternative ways of responding to these feelings.
- Understand the impact of their behaviour on other people.
- Repair relationships.

Pupils who bully will be provided with clear expectations about behaviour. This may include taking steps to repair a relationship, and where appropriate, supporting them to make amends.

We will challenge prejudice and offer the opportunity to learn and change behaviour. Consideration will be given to any factors that may impact upon a pupil's wellbeing, including whether any additional support for learning is required.

WHAT HAVE THE PUPILS TOLD US?

Our pupils have told us that they are aware of who they should tell if they're worried about bullying. They all know the 'answer' to that question. They can be generally reluctant to talk about it, and they have shared some of the reasons for this:

- They fear an adult over reaction
- They worry that they will get into trouble
- They feel they won't be believed
- Telling will make things worse

The adult over reaction includes parents, carers, grandparents and teachers and staff. It is vital therefore that parents and school staff share the approach that we will listen, we will work together and we will reflect on our values of kindness, honesty, respect and responsibility.

WHAT PUPILS CAN EXPECT?

Pupils can expect -

- To be treated fairly
- To be safe and to be themselves
- To be listened to and involved and asked about what is happening to them
- That bullying will never be ignored
- To be supported and helped when bullied, we will always address the impact of bullying and support children and their families to feel safe and that children who are bullied are helped to feel like themselves again.
- That staff will monitor the impact of bullying on an ongoing basis.

WHAT PARENTS AND CARERS CAN EXPECT?

Parents and carers can notify any member of staff if they are concerned about bullying. Parents will be included and informed when there are concerns about bullying. The school will investigate these first and make a judgment on the severity of the behaviour and the impact before contacting parents or carers.

MONITORING AND RECORDING BULLYING

All staff can respond to bullying concerns and must always share this with the Leadership Team.

A member of the Leadership Team is responsible for implementing, monitoring, and reviewing any incidents of bullying.

All incidents of bullying will be recorded locally. We use the SEEMIS management system including Pastoral Notes to record and monitor instances of bullying behaviour. Staff can access the “Bullying Log” in SEEMIS through Management Bullying and Equalities.

The purpose for recording is for schools to learn about what kind of bullying is happening in their establishment and to identify if there are trends or issues which require addressing.

When recording bullying incidents, the following information must be included:

- The children and young people involved as well as other adults
- The type of bullying experienced – name calling, threats or rumours etc.
- Any underlying prejudice including details of any of the protected characteristics
- The impact of the bullying incident, including consideration of personal or additional support needs and wellbeing concerns and
- Actions taken including resolution at an individual or organisational level.